



## HOYLAKE VISION

Making Things Happen in Hoylake

**Joanne Storey**  
**Principal Planning Officer**  
**Wirral Borough Council**  
**Town Hall**  
**South Annexe**  
**Brighton Street**  
**Wallasey CH44 8ED**

**14.03.18**

**Ref: APP/17/01191 | Conversion of Edwardian Town Hall to a small one or two screen cinema/ arts space with associated cafe/bistro, fine dining restaurant, atrium cafe/bar with small retail units around a central courtyard, with further retail units for artists and makers. Also included are 40 apartments on 4 levels above the ground floor artisan spaces. | The Old Town Hall, 4 ALBERT ROAD, HOYLAKE, CH47 2AB**

Dear Joanne

Hoylake Vision Community Planning Forum have assessed the above application in the context of the Hoylake Neighbourhood Development Plan.

This is a major proposal for Hoylake which is firmly supported by the Vision Statement of the Community Planning Forum: *“To maintain Hoylake as an environmentally attractive seaside town and socially inclusive place to live, work in and to visit. To be a healthier, well-housed community with a thriving economy which values creativity and entrepreneurialism. To support a vibrant town centre, which meets the day-to-day needs of local people and provides high quality food, drink and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors. To support the town centre and the Carr Lane Industrial Estate as the foci for a wide range of easily accessible jobs.”*

The Hoylake Vision Survey which formed the basis for front loaded consultation found 84% of respondents identified attracting uses which do not rely on alcohol consumption, such as a cinema, arts venue and later shopping, as a high priority. The evident level of public support for this proposal, indicated both through the consultation process undertaken by the proposers, as well as the Council’s statutory consultation, would indicate that the community remains very supportive of these priorities.

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**Hoylake Vision Community Planning Forum**

Town Hall Chambers, 1, The Quadrant, Hoylake CH47 2EE • e: [info@hoylakevision.org.uk](mailto:info@hoylakevision.org.uk) t: 0151 632 1657

The following NDP themes, with their associated objectives, priorities and policies are particularly relevant:

- NDP Key Objectives
- Theme 5.2 Improving the Town Centre
- Theme 5.4 Getting around Hoylake
- Theme 5.5 Special buildings and places
- Theme 5.6 Homes in Hoylake

Data from the 2001 and 2011 Census demonstrate a clear trend in the NDP area that the NDP sets out to address in these objectives, priorities and policies. It is considered that this major proposal is needed to meet the needs of this changing demographic and it will do so in a sustainable way:

*“While retired people make up nearly one quarter of the population, compared to 16% nationally, the [above] figures indicate that Hoylake is becoming a popular place for young families to settle and its population is increasing. This challenges the commonly held view that Hoylake is a predominantly retirement-age community with relatively few people of working-age and a declining population. The 2011 Census data confirms that there is a sound foundation in Hoylake on which to build a more sustainable community.”*

## KEY OBJECTIVES

The proposals are supported by the following headline objectives of the NDP:

- To support the provision of additional housing, including affordable housing to meet the identified needs of the existing and future population.
- To strengthen the rôle of the town centre as a place for shopping, services and community facilities. To assist in increasing footfall in order to retain existing businesses and jobs as well as attract new businesses and grow the number of local jobs.
- To support a vibrant evening economy which provides high quality food, drink and entertainment opportunities, cultural attractions and later retail trading without prejudicing the amenities of the local area, particularly the amenities of local residents.
- To conserve and enhance the distinctive Victorian and Edwardian character of Hoylake and its maritime and sporting heritage, recognising that these are key elements in making Hoylake a special place.
- To maintain a safe and attractive pedestrian and cycling environment within the town centre, and to support public transport and traffic management initiatives.
- To improve pedestrian links between the town centre, the promenade and the railway stations to meet the needs and expectations of residents and visitors.

Further, the proposals are supported by the following UDP policies and emerging CSLP Objectives:

- UDP – Part 1 Policies
  - Policy URN1 - Development and Urban Regeneration
  - Policy HSG2 - Affordable Housing
  - Policy REC1 - Principles for Sport and Recreation
  - Policy TLR1 - Principles for Tourism Development
  - Policy CHO1- The Protection of Heritage
  - Policy TRT1 - Provision for Public Transport
  - Policy TRT3 - Transport and the Environment
  - Policy SHO1 - Principles for New Retail Development
- Core Strategy Local Plan Strategic Objectives
  - Policy CS1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
  - Policy CS2 – Broad Spatial Strategy
  - Policy CS9 – Priorities for Hoylake and West Kirby

## THEME 5.2: IMPROVING THE TOWN CENTRE

The proposals are supported by the following NDP Policies:

- **HS1. ACTIVE FRONTAGES**  
In each area defined on the Proposals Map (Map 2) as a 'key shopping area' (Map 6), development proposals, including those for a change of use to Use Class A1, A2, A3, A4, and/or A5, will be permitted, provided that a consistent active frontage would be maintained at ground floor level.
- **HS2. NEW DEVELOPMENT**  
Selective redevelopment of buildings within the town centre boundary shown on the Proposals Map will be supported where proposals are able to demonstrate that they would make a positive contribution to a vibrant mix of uses and would deliver buildings and external space of high quality design.
- **HS4. EVENING ECONOMY**  
Within the town centre boundary shown on the Proposals Map all development proposals, including those for a change of use, that would promote and/or support early evening activity related to high quality food and drink, arts and cultural uses and later retail trading will be permitted, subject to the proposal being able to demonstrate that it would have no significantly adverse effect upon the amenities of the local area, particularly the amenities of local residents.
- **HS5. UPPER FLOORS**  
Within the town centre boundary shown on the Proposals Map all proposals for buildings with an active frontage at ground floor level that seek to create, rehabilitate or change the use of upper floors for a residential (Use Class C1, C2 or C3) use will be permitted, subject to the proposal being able to demonstrate that it would have no significantly adverse effect upon the living conditions of occupants of nearby buildings with a residential use. All proposals for upper storey office (Use Class B1) space will be permitted, subject to the provisions of Policy CL1. This policy shall apply equally to proposals where the upper floor use(s) would be either directly related to or separate from the existing ground floor use.

The job creation potential of the scheme is also notable. This is a central theme of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and is explicitly mentioned in the Vision Statement of the Forum: *"To support the town centre and the Carr Lane Industrial Estate as the foci for a wide range of easily accessible jobs."*

Further, the following Non-land use policy is supported:

- Proposals that would bring additional jobs to Hoylake will generally be encouraged.

## **THEME 5.4: GETTING AROUND HOYLAKE**

Policy TR1 States:

- **TR1. MARKET STREET**

Inside the 'key shopping areas' defined on the Proposals Map, proposals that would assist in:

- Managing traffic speeds;
- Improving pedestrian and cycle connections between Market Street, the promenade and the railway stations;
- Addressing traffic congestion, or
- Providing well-designed on-street parking that supports local businesses will be supported.

The Forum are aware that some nearby residents have expressed concerns about parking. The proposals sit within easy reach of two free car parks as well as time limited street parking for a total of 278 cars.

The Transport Statement provided in support of the application uses evidence gathered from existing uses measured against estimated trip generation for the whole scheme using industry standard TRICS datasets to conclude that:

- 5.17 It is therefore considered that the trip generation and car parking demand potential for the proposals is likely to be similar to or lower than that for the previous uses accommodated at the site.

Nevertheless, the forum would urge WMBC to consider supporting this proposal by providing clear signage to these free car parks. Should further parking restrictions in the area be required to address congestion issues, then policy TR1 would support this.

The Council are also encouraged to work with the proposers of the scheme in order to support the following non-land use priorities that support Policy TR1:

- Working in partnership with Network Rail to ensure safe and convenient rail crossings for all users.
- Working in partnership with Merseytravel, Merseyrail, bus operators and the Council to improve public transport by extending services to include a wider range of destinations and making physical improvements at bus stops and railway stations, including the proposed 'Hoylake Station gateway and passenger interchange'.
- Improving the quality and accessibility of public rights of way by influencing the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

## **THEME 5.5: SPECIAL BUILDINGS AND PLACES**

This theme identifies the “cluster of distinctive buildings (both listed and unlisted)” that include the former Town Hall, Fire Station (1930s) and Old Fire house. Relevant emerging CSLP priorities are to: *“maintain the Victorian and Edwardian heritage of the coastal resorts” and “Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas at Hoylake”.*

The forum consider the proposals, which are at the heart of the Conservation Area, will both preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by improving what is, at present, a partly derelict site.

The 1930s Fire Station masters house is no longer habitable and is in very poor condition. The adjacent Engine House has been significantly remodelled over the years and, whilst there is some limited architectural merit in the Engine House roofline remaining, the remainder of the building is in very poor condition indeed.

The forum consider that the bold and distinctive contemporary design of the new building, which includes sympathetic use of materials to complement the existing original (1890s) Fire Engine House and Old Town Hall, which will be retained and enhanced, outweighs any remaining architectural merit of the 1930s Engine House, which is not fit for purpose over the long term.

Given the setting of the proposal; a quadrant of very dominant three and four storey red brick buildings, some of which sit opposite an attractive terrace of Victorian houses in Station Road, the scale of the building is considered to be in keeping with the remainder of the Quadrant. Adjacent units in Albert Road are three storey, of which two residential units are identified.

The proposals are supported by the following policies:

- **D12. SCALE AND DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT**  
All proposals for new buildings and for the extension or alteration of existing buildings, whether inside or outside the Conservation Areas, must respond to the distinctive character and reflect the identity of the area in terms of their size, design and materials of construction.
- **D13. DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS**  
Where development is likely to affect the significance of any designated heritage asset, the proposal must specify how it would conserve and enhance that significance.

The proposals would also support the following Non-land use policies:

- Heritage interpretation including building plaques, signs (that do not create street clutter), leaflets and online resources.
- Improving local identity by celebrating Hoylake through the physical improvement of key gateways into the area.
- Creative lighting of key character buildings and listed buildings.
- Better promotion of Hoylake to attract more visitors.
- Hosting events such as arts festivals, film nights and street parties.

## **THEME 5.6: HOMES IN HOYLAKE**

The theme states: *The emerging CSLP indicates that the population of Hoylake and West Kirby has declined 'from 24,800 in mid-2008 to 24,700 in 2010 and is expected to decline further to 24,400 by 2027' and that "almost a quarter of the population is of retirement age or above. Hoylake alone, though, presents a very different picture and should be considered separately. The population of Hoylake and Meols Ward is 12,834 (Census, 2011), which represents an increase of around 2% since 2001. There has also been a slight decrease in the number of people of retirement age and the current proportion of the 30-59 age group is very close to the national average (39.4% in Hoylake compared with 40.0% nationally). This is a strong indication that Hoylake is an increasingly popular place for younger families to live and that consequently the town is likely to increase in population rather than decrease and to display a more balanced age profile than West Kirby.*

Monitoring trends in census data should help inform planning decisions. Hoylake Vision consider this to be of particular relevance in Hoylake, which has in the past seen an imbalance in its demography impact over time on the local economy. These positive trends noted in the census data should be noted and taken into account when planning decisions are made.

Any town needs to retain a healthy demographic balance in order to ensure economic sustainability over the long term; leisure, retail and job opportunities are strong attractors for younger people in particular. This proposal is welcome because it will provide much needed new housing, retail and leisure facilities that will support the clearly evidenced changing demographic of the town, helping to further rebalance the population for a more sustainable future.

The following policies apply:

- **H1. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**  
All proposals for new dwellings within the existing built-up area, including infilling, redevelopment, conversion and change of use of buildings or land to a residential use (Use Classes C1, C2, C3 and C4) will be supported, provided that they would accord with Policies DI2, DI3 and CL2 (where relevant) and would not have a significantly adverse effect upon the distinctive character of the local area or the living conditions of occupants of surrounding dwellings.

The project also serves to support the The Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010 (SHMA) and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), both of which demonstrate a clear need for new housing of this type in Hoylake.

## **CONCLUSION**

Hoylake Community Planning Forum consider the proposal to be supported by the NDP.

The Management Group therefore welcome this proposal and recommend its approval on behalf of the Hoylake Community Planning Forum.

**Hoylake Vision Community Planning Forum Management Group**  
13 March 2018